



# Knowing Your Students

## Why go this route?

- Because not “leaving children behind” means starting where they are.
- Because some children’s need for a particular style or condition is intense enough to be a matter of psychological health and positive self-esteem and can either block or slow learning.
- Because intrinsic motivation is more powerful than external rewards... and honoring a child’s preference for communication style is deeply satisfying and motivating.
- Because starting with individualized knowledge of learners is fundamental to good instructional practice.
- Because commitment to a standards-based curriculum is not enough without skilled, professional instructional judgment to tailor it to individual learners.

## You’ll know you’ve arrived when...

- You can map your students’ preferences, interests, styles and temperaments.
- You’ve discussed learning differences with your class, listened to students’ self-descriptions and looked for ways to accommodate their styles.
- You have a tool for “teaching around the wheel” which recognizes the full spectrum of preferences and needs... and you use it when you start to plan lessons and units.

## Construction Zone

- This is the second of six steps in a full instructional design and delivery cycle outlined in MI-Map Packets. See Packets 5:1 to 5:6 for the others.



- This packet will help a teacher get a “fix” on the needs of learners in a given classroom. A full-staff retreat 2-4 weeks into the year would let teachers confer with previous teachers about their kids’ styles.



## It’s about TIME

- Step 2 requires classroom observation time. An aide, a counselor or a principal could take the class while the teacher makes notes.
- Steps 3 & 4 might each take 20–90 minutes of class time depending on grade level.
- Step 5 is teacher planning that might benefit from full staff or grade-level discussion with each teacher’s observations in hand.




## Potential COSTS

- No identifiable costs.

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide  
to knowing your students  
well enough to design  
instruction for them.*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Get an introduction to “temperament”** as a tool for describing personality preferences, or decide on another descriptive framework if you prefer.

INSERT for Step 1 offers an introduction to “temperament” and the Resource page on the back of this wrapper suggests several resources for learning more.

- 2 Observe your students’ behaviors**, and make notes about what seems to be each child’s preference.

INSERT for Step 2 offers a worksheet on which you can locate students’ names or note behaviors that match the clues about what to look for if you’re using “temperament” as a descriptor.

MI-Map Packet 3:3 “*Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships*” offers other observational and activity techniques for getting to know your students individually and collectively. Gather in all the data you can collect about who these learners are, and use it to “map” your students on the temperament framework or another one of your choice.

- 3 Ask your students to self-describe** their own temperaments.

INSERT A for Step 3 offers one way of soliciting information that would help you to identify students’ preferences. INSERT B for step 3 is an interactive story designed to spark discussion about preferences in a way that elicits temperament information. If it works well for you, buy the book Type Tales from the source on the resource page for the complete set. Certified MBTI users and True Colors consultants can also suggest a number of ways to introduce students to the concept of understanding preferences as a bridge across differences.

- 4 Look at class patterns of temperament.** Read and discuss your students’ patterns with your own peers until you have lots of specific examples of how all types are needed for a well-rounded team or class. Then plan a discussion with students.

One activity for helping students see and hear differences more clearly is to ask groups of students who share a temperament to make lists of what they like and don’t like (in school, in friends, etc.). The idea is for each group to exaggerate their preferences and then listen while all groups report out. Talk about how school would look if that group were “in charge”.

Another activity for exploring differences involves stepping into each other’s preferences temporarily. Declare a whole morning “Blue Day” and have everyone learn like the Blue group prefers. Talk about how it felt to those with other preferences. The next day is “Orange Day” etc.

- 5 Reflect about lesson and unit planning**, and how you might take the whole range of needs into account as you choose instructional activities.

Alice Terry calls this “Teaching Around The Wheel” because it plans four kinds of activities each time a learning task is involved. This turns out to have a hidden instructional advantage since children need to change activities frequently to stay engaged. INSERT for Step 5 is a planning tool that you could pick up any time you plan a lesson or unit... to jog your thinking. Start in the quadrant most familiar and natural to you and develop a learning activity, but then stretch yourself to add three other kinds of learning activities.

## Getting more mileage from knowing your students better

*How knowing your learners well enough  
to design instruction for their needs benefits  
your school in regard to the following initiatives:*

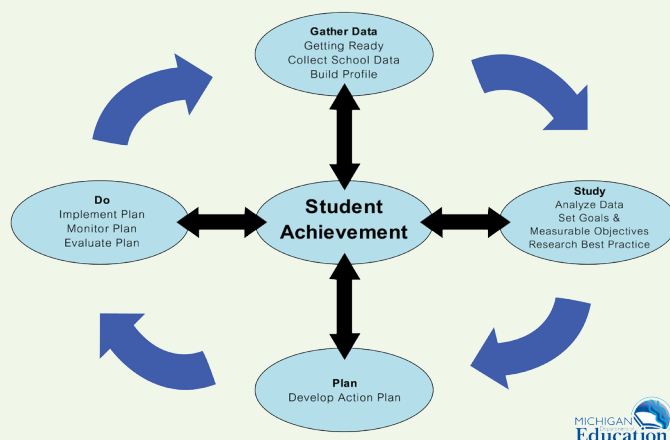
### Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

- ESEA mandates that results of annual assessments be disaggregated by poverty levels, race, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, disability, and limited English proficiency. Reports will indicate clearly if any subgroup fails to make adequate yearly progress. To insure that all his students are prepared for state expectations, each teacher must know every student's unique story—where does she come from, what is his family like, what can she do, and what skills do they bring to the classroom?

### State Accreditation System

- This MI-Map packet will help implement a systematic way of inviting an entire staff to reflect on its instructional design and delivery practices... and to develop action plans for self-directed change.

### Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI) Michigan School Improvement Framework



After completing this packet, the staff will have a more complete picture of the school's students and the many subgroups within the school's population. Staff will be prepared to adjust instructional practices to meet individual student needs as they monitor and evaluate their strategies.



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## Resources

### *Books, Articles, Websites*

#### **Understanding Yourself and Others: An Introduction to Temperament**

**Linda V. Berens. Huntington Beach, CA:  
Telos Publications, 2000.**

An information-packed 40-page booklet that outlines many of the needs and predictable stressors for each temperament, with suggestions for responses. Great for classrooms.

#### **True Colors**

<http://www.true-colors.com/>

This website offers a quick questionnaire that identifies the relative strength of each of four “colors” which correspond to Keirsey’s four temperaments as well as other resources.

#### **Type Tales**

**Diane Ferris. Center for Applications of Psychological Type, 414 Southwest 7th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32601.**

The sample story we include as INSERT B (for helping students identify temperaments) came from this great book.

<http://www.capt.org/catalog/>

#### **Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc**

<http://www.mbti.com/>

Recommendations for certified facilitators who administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI).

### *People*

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education  
Improvement and Innovation  
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit  
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit  
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment  
and Accountability  
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood  
and Family Services  
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services  
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation  
and Teacher Certification  
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education  
and Early Intervention Services  
517-373-9433

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